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ABSTRACT

Progress in second language instruction requires both new materials and a change in teacher attitudes, but the materials are easier to come by than the attitude change. The paper describes classroom exchanges occurring in two lessons given in Austrian sixth and eighth grade English classes respectively that illustrate the differences between a teacher-centered and a learner-centered approach. In the teacher-centered approach, the methodological sequences are relatively fixed; by contrast, the learner-centered approach has as its objective to stimulate the students' imagination and encourage them to share it with the class. The teachers' descriptions of their feelings during the lessons and the reactions of teacher trainees to similar situations show that it is their anxieties that prevent them from letting go of their function as a classroom control mechanism and acting as facilitators for the students' language development. A common teacher attitude appears to be that errors must be corrected directly and immediately. Other teacher concerns include fear of classroom silence, pressure to cover the necessary material, and feelings of inadequacy to the teaching task. This suggests that teacher training should focus more on teacher confidence and ability to establish an atmosphere in which students can experiment with the language. Three samples of students' writing are included. (MSE)

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BEYOND NOTIONS AND FUNCTIONS: LANGUAGE TEACHING OR THE ART OF LETTING GO

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TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN AUSTRIA

Currently the majority of Austrian schoolchildren learn English. Starting in 1983 all pupils, however, will be exposed to an introductory-language program in the primary schools (almost exclusively in English, with a few classes in French) which will be based on a modern functionally-notionally oriented syllabus. The primary purpose of this program (60 hours spread over two years) is to sensitize 8- and 9-year old pupils to a foreign language. By 1985 all students in the secondary schools will receive approximately 500 hours of English within four years and about 25 percent of them will continue studying the language for another four years.

All language teaching in Austrian schools has to fit into the framework of a syllabus issued by the Ministry of Education. Research, however, has shown that the textbook is the crucial factor influencing what goes on in the classroom. The textbooks must, of course, be compatible with the official syllabus. At the moment experts are beginning to revise the present syllabus, with its heavy emphasis on grammatical progression, to create one which will reflect the view that language ought to be taught as communication.

Our research findings (Gerngroß 1982, Puchta 1982) reveal that meaning is sadly neglected in many classrooms while a truly communicative atmosphere prevails in a modest number of classes with enthusiastic teachers. Experiences in in-service training sometimes remind us very much of a photo in *Newsweek* (November 15, 1982) of a Chinese teacher holding a flashcard with a bus on it and pointing at the blackboard on which the learners can read the sentences:

> What's this? Is this a bus?
>
> It's a bus. Yes, it is.

The underlying concept of a great many lessons seems to be based on the belief that the addition of grammar and vocabulary produces language and that the structures must be mastered before communication can take place. The learners are looked upon as receptacles to be filled with grammar and words according to the textbook's pace neglecting essentials such as the message of texts and the emotions, attitudes and needs of the pupils.

DEVELOPING NEW LANGUAGE TEACHING MATERIALS

We consider the term "communicative language teaching" to be a broad term. This has the disadvantage, however, that it is easy to put the label "communicative" on materials which amount to nothing more than a compilation of texts and exercises arranged according to the current staple diet of language-teaching techniques. However, here it should be emphasized that we certainly do not hold the technical side in low esteem. A host of new ideas in language teaching, such as the information gap (a situation in which one participant in an exchange has information the others do not know and need to find out) and problem-solving activities, have proved extremely valuable. Yet we do not think that techniques alone are a sufficiently broad basis for teaching materials which claim to foster communication among the pupils in a classroom situation. Since the

majority of teachers seem to be closely guided by their textbook a quantum leap forward presupposes two things:

1. the creation of teaching materials that enable teachers to put the ideas of communicative teaching into practice.

2. a significant change in teachers' attitudes, a process to which we will refer to later as "letting go."

Judging from our in-service training experience in Austria, a great number of teachers are willing to change their approach and teaching methods provided the necessary teaching materials are readily accessible. Otherwise the hoped for revolution will stop short in front of the classroom door.

What should the materials on which communicative-language teaching can be based look like? We highly value the work on syllabus construction by D.A. Wilkins (1976) and J. Van Ek (1976), but we do not think that the functional-notional approach can be the core concept of a new curriculum (although a functional-notional and a grammatical progression is necessary for any course material). If we really want our pupils "to do things with words" in a foreign language, the key concept must be a pedagogical one linking the pupils' selves with the topics relevant to them.

Making them act out the role of somebody who complains or apologizes in a certain situation is important but certainly not enough because a teaching course following a litany of functions (formerly: structures) might help to activate the children's minds but certainly not win their hearts. We rather envisage materials which not only enable them to buy a ticket or to make suggestions, but which also foster processes in the classroom which revolve round the here and now--thus blending objectives for a distant future with the pupil's immediate needs.

For a long time our approach has been eclectic and we have integrated every useful technique. We readily admit that our ideas are based on a concept that we ourselves do not see as complete, but still open for discussion. We do believe, however, that the focus of language teaching must be on the learners' self, integrated in a "learning by doing process" that allows both second-language acquisition and learning. It is not possible here to go into detail, but we should like to mention that a theoretical concept with practical examples has already been developed and is to be found in Puchta and Schratz 1983.

As far as our ideas about teaching materials are concerned there are some requirements which we consider absolutely necessary, but which teachers woefully miss in materials currently used. It must be made clear which sort of text is being presented. Materials abound in "non-texts" whose characteristic feature is that they occur only in schoolbooks and nowhere else. The role of the one who receives messages or produces utterances must be clear. We have found that materials which contain roles that reflect the pupils' own world stimulate processes of greater depth (Stevick 1976) since the learners say or write what they want to get across.

In one of the textbooks widely used in Austria, there is a scene where English children are shown having a pet show. Even when learners act out this scene

creatively and enthusiastically, they do not reach the depth of involvement which is almost tangible when they act out a short text which presents a family conflict revolving round the question of whether the children should be allowed to have a pet or not. Here the observer feels that a great many of the pupils seem to throw themselves into the situation thus acquiring language rather than learning it (Dulay, Burt, and Karshen 1982).

This corresponds to the response given when we asked a class we have watched closely for about two years what kind of lesson they liked best. Many referred to a situation in which they had written poems stimulated by simple drawings and were given written feedback on their classmates' poems. Their evaluation reminded us very much of Stevick (1976) quoting Curran who claimed that a student may even develop a new language self. Quite a lot of these pupils who were then 13-years old seemed to be more at ease in expressing feelings in English than in their native German.

One final example may suffice. Many of the newly-labelled textbooks and materials provide a host of boring texts such as how to repair a puncture on your bike, the underlying idea being that kids like to ride bikes. (They do, but learn to repair them by watching someone patch a tire, not by reading instructions.) Literary texts, fables, fairy tales are often neglected. One of the most appreciated texts we used was a story in which an elephant and a flower quarrel about their identity (Patten 1974). The pupils cherished its literary value and they spontaneously wanted to act out several role plays in which they, in the roles of imaginary animals and plants, strongly defended themselves against threats to their identity. Materials must be such that it is a rewarding task for the pupils to talk about them and about how they felt when they read or listened to them or acted parts of them out. The teaching situation itself becomes an important topic in its own right and the pupils "grow" by exposure to different perceptions, ideas and emotions to the same situation and by gradually learning to share them.

CLASSROOM ENCOUNTERS

Since we began developing our own ideas about communicative-language teaching we have often been struck by a phenomenon that can be observed in any teaching/learning situation: there are a number of teachers who seem to be able to elicit processes of language learning which encourage the learners to express themselves in the foreign language; there are many with at least the same theoretical background and perhaps even better training who seem not to be able to do this at all. Their lessons are boring and if you watch them you become aware that the students, although taking part in various activities, do not get involved with their real interests and intentions. What else is it then that in addition to suitable and motivating materials triggers off in the pupils a crossing of the borderline between compliance with the teaching situation (which becomes obvious in the question of "What does the teacher want me to do?") and the emergence of their real selves?

As said above there is obviously little or no connection between the strikingly different results and the teachers' levels of methodological knowledge. Apart from aspects of the "outer world" affecting the teaching/learning situation--such as situational and social factors, level of the students' foreign language,

etc.--it will be suggested in the following that the teaching/learning process is crucially influenced by the "inner world" of the teacher (and of the learners, of course). In traditional methodology courses this aspect is totally neglected which does not mean that it cannot become part of teacher-training which attempts to integrate both the outer and the inner conditions. There is no doubt about the fact that the teachers must have a wide set of techniques at their disposal. Recent studies have shown, however, that effects of personality on the learners have a vital influence on their second-language development. "All the things being equal, the self-confident, secure person is a more successful language learner," as Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982:75) suggest.

If this is true, and our experience confirms this, teaching techniques are useful but they are by no means sufficient to allow for growth of the learners' personality. If teachers want to establish an atmosphere that allows personal as well as linguistic development, they must be aware that their own personalities play a decisive role.

Most of the time it is our anxieties that hinder us from being aware of what is really going on in the lesson, and that is why many teachers find it difficult to discuss topics going, beyond the mere technical side of the problem. Quite frequently, these aspects of the inner world are suppressed and consequently denied in discussions about language teaching.

In the last few years we have frequently demonstrated practical examples of communicative-language teaching in the classroom situation before going into the theoretical concepts. The two lessons presented in the following were given individually by the authors as teaching demonstrations in the course of an in-service training seminar in December 1982 with 50 teachers as critical observers. By trying to describe parts of the teaching/learning process as seen from the teachers' (ours in this particular case) point of view and by presenting lesson plans and texts written by the learners we hope to give an overall idea of our concepts. In doing so, we are aware of the fact that a great number of spectators adds elements of the unusual and the normal routine may be distorted. We nevertheless chose to describe these two lessons, as the pressure and the wish to succeed inherent in such a situation enhanced our awareness of the difficulty in letting go.

The two lessons presented here are intended to show a certain progression from one to the other: the first one, given in a sixth-grade class (average age 12 years) after approximately 200 lessons of English (45 minutes each), can be characterized as one of the first of many steps to establish an atmosphere of self-concept and self-oriented language learning. The second class is already a couple of steps further on in this process. Accordingly the first lesson follows a more teacher-centered curriculum which implies that the methodological sequences are less open than in the second. This second lesson cannot be regarded as typical for the teaching/learning situation in that class (eighth grade, after approximately 400 lessons). We regard it as an experiment which we believe, however, is worth talking about.

A characteristic feature of the type of school at which the lessons were given is that the pupils are of widely varied proficiency since most of the clearly academically able students attend another type of school.

Lesson 1

The objective of this lesson was to introduce the topic "Where I live." The pupils were expected to read and understand the dialogue and to write their own text based on the "Mini Memory" models. (T stands for teacher, P for pupil; the pupils' quotations are from tape transcripts.)

Step One: (T writes the following words on the blackboard: Steve - Philip - clouds - poster - real butterflies - sister - nosey - kite - birthday - Africa.)

T: Let's talk about the words. (A minute of silence ensues.)

I'm beginning to feel scared. What will I do if they don't say anything? What if the method doesn't work? How will I be able to compensate? Chris Brumfit's advice pops into my head: "Kids should be given time to think about what they are going to say." But are they really thinking? Or are they just waiting for me to do something? I realize that my anxiety stems from the fact that I am doing something in order to achieve something else. I badly want to convince my colleagues that our approach works. And it occurs to me that I must forget my plans and throw myself into the silence, making it the topic--but now the kids start pouring out sentences.

P1: I think it's a story.

P2: What does the word nosey mean?

P3: I think Steve and Philip have a poster with real butterflies.

P4: Steve and Philip buy a poster with clouds and butterflies as a birthday present for their sister.

The concept applied here is known as "advance organizers" which tie the topic to already existing associations in pupils' minds thus getting them involved from the very beginning.

Step Two:

T: Can you use the words and make something out of them?

This may sound more open than it actually is. The children usually either make a story together or prepare a role play. This time they all opt for a role play. At this stage the teacher withdraws, available to answer questions, but does not interfere with the group process. It has not yet become fully transparent to us how the children manage to come up with a role play in about 5-7 minutes, but they do. They seem to have ready-made parts of scenes for almost every situation stored in their minds once they have learned to tap and trust their resources and feel free and secure to make use of them. Since they have formed groups of their own liking, the process of negotiating the roles, lines and content is given the greatest attention.

Everybody's position and rank in the group seems to be clear. English is spoken most of the time, although they sometimes fall back into German when strong

emotions seem to make an immediate reply imperative. As teachers it has taken us quite a while to learn to live with self-imposed passivity at this stage. We have experienced that when the children are trusted they will sense it and work hard without being supervised. They know that the teacher respects their ideas and that linguistic mistakes do not matter while planning the role play.

> *I realize, however, that I'm getting impatient. Why can't they work faster? I already know the next step and the one after that. It's a feeling I have much too often. It's the attitude of teachers who think "they must get their students through the textbook by the end of the course" (Stevick 1982:8).*

Step Three: Role play

All the groups want to perform their role play but for the sake of showing all of the steps only the first group to finish is picked to perform. The children introduce themselves first as Steve, Philip, the mother, the shop assistant and the sister.

Mother: Steve and Philip.

Steve and Philip: Yes?

Mother: Go in the shop and buy for Elke a present.

Steve and Philip: Yes. (To Elke) Elke what do you want for your birthday?

Elke: I would like a poster with a butterfly or a kite.

Steve and Philip: Yes, okay.

(In the shop.)

Shop assistant: Hello.

Steve and Philip: Hello.

Steve: We are buy a...(Philip interrupts)

Philip: want...

Steve: We want to buy a real butterfly.

Shop assistant: I have not a real butterfly.

Philip: Have you got a poster with a butterfly?

Shop assistant: Yes, here.

Steve: How much is it?

Shop assistant: One pound.

Steve and Philip: Here you are.

Shop assistant: Thanks. Good-bye.

(At home.)

Steve and Philip: Here is the poster.

Mother: It's very good.

Steve and Philip: Here Elke, here your present for your birthday.

Elke: Thank you.

The teacher's reaction is very important for the pupils. We have learned that fixed expectations prevent the teacher from appreciating unusually imaginative versions which often provide interesting insights into the pupils' minds and often stimulate lively talk about the text. Inconsistencies (Elke wants a poster but first Steve tries to buy a real butterfly) are only dealt with if the pupils themselves point them out.

A note concerning error correction: For us it is a question of when and how. When the focus of interest is on meaning we hardly ever correct unless an unobtrusive correction is possible. When the focus is on form we always correct helping to develop a monitor in the pupil's mind to prevent fossilization of incorrect utterances even though they cause no problems for understanding. We believe that it takes most teachers a lot of time to learn to correct in a constructive way. Many tend to become angry since the pupils are not doing what they want them to do--namely to speak correctly or they may see the mistakes of the pupils as evidence that their methods have failed.

Step Four: (The text (Gerngroß, Puchta, and Schratz 1982) is handed out.)

(Scene 1)

Two children are looking at a poster in a shop window.

Steve: Look at that poster! Isn't it beautiful?

Philip: Which one do you mean?

Steve: The one with the cornfield.

Philip: Yes, it's great. The clouds and all the butterflies.

Steve: Do you like butterflies?

Philip: Yes, very much.

Steve: I've got some really big ones from Africa at home.

Philip: Have you?

Steve: Would you like to see them?

Philip: Yes, very much.

Steve: Can you come with me?

Philip: Sure.

(Scene 2)

In Steve's flat.

Steve: Hi mum. This is Philip. He is in my class.

Mrs. Perkins: Hello Philip.

Philip: Good afternoon, Mrs. Perkins.

(Scene 3)

In Steve's room.

Philip: Shall I shut the door?

Steve: Please do. Then my sister can't hear us.

Philip: Is she a problem?

Steve: Yes, she is so nosey.

Philip: I see.

Steve: Come on, the butterflies are in my desk.

Philip: Ah. They are wonderful. Such beautiful colors. This one looks like a Chinese kite.

(Scene 4)

Philip at home.

Philip: Hello mum.

Mother: Philip, where have you been? It's five o'clock.

Philip: Mum, my birthday is on the eleventh, isn't it?

Mother: Yes, I know. Why?

Philip: I'd like five really big butterflies from Africa.

The pupils read silently. They ask questions:

P1: What is sky?

Or comment on the text:

P2: I have...oh that's an Admiral. We have at home three books of butterflies, yes. They belong to my brother.

Step Five:

Since reading and interpreting texts are highly idiosyncratic skills this next step takes this into account by its openness. The teacher initiates discussion about the text with the question:

T: Can we talk about the text?

This step requires a lot of self-discipline since the process of negotiating meaning is slow and requires patience. Communicative-language teaching--as we understand it--puts great emphasis on listening in a Rogerian sense which implies an active will to try to understand others. We find this one of the hardest tasks to achieve since the children are used to listening to the teacher but not to their peers. There are no quick, set recipes. That the teacher be a patient listener is the basic requirement.

P3: Scene 1 and 4 are very long, since 2 and 3 is not very long.

T: Do you like long or short scenes?

P3: Yes.

T: What do you mean "Yes?"

P3: Pardon?

T: Which do you like better, long or short scenes?

P3: Long scenes.

...

P4: My mother is also very nosey. (Laughter)

T: Do you mean she checks your homework and everything?

P5: She much check the homework.

T: Why?

P5: What's "Fehler" in English?

T: Mistake.

P5: Because...the mistakes.

Step Six:

The teacher tells the pupils to underline the important words. (They know how to handle this technique, the function of which is to make sure that everybody has actually understood the text.) When they have finished, the underlined words of one or two pupils are written on the blackboard and the class tries to restore the text orally. Those who failed to understand parts of the text when they read it silently will hopefully grasp the meaning with the help of this "safety net."

The teacher helps along, correcting if necessary.

P6: There are miss some words.

T: You mean some words are missing.

P6: Yes.

Step Seven: (Two Mini Memory Texts are handed out.)

Text 1 (Nice things in my room.)

I have got three beautiful posters of animals. A tiger, a dog and a cat. There is a map of England over my desk and some photos from our holiday in Italy. On cold days I like my warm bed best.

Text 2 (A room I'd like to have.)

I'd like to have a nice room. With a big bed, a big desk and lots of photos on the wall. I like pets very much. I'd like to have a budgie or a hamster. I'd like blue curtains with white butterflies on them.

The idea, originating with H.E. Piepho (1982), is that the texts are to resemble the level of the writing skill of the pupils who can and do identify with them as their own, as far as structure and content are concerned. These texts form the basis for dictation exercises and tests and for homework in which variations are produced. The pupils are to study them carefully. The idea is that they store such texts in their long-term memory in order to create a pool from which they can randomly take bits of information whenever they are faced with the task of text production.

My room

I have got five posters on the wall in my room. The first poster is a racing car, the second a horse and the three posters are dogs. I like dog, now have got one, it's a Schäfer. It's name is Senta. On my desk is my foto. I like my room very much.

Lesson 2

Well, here I am, waiting for pupils to come and aware of the hundred threatening eyes of my colleagues. How could I have been so foolish as to believe that I could try out something experimental in the presence of so many who are "ready-to-see-me-fall?" Try to calm down again, relax, look at them. How do you know they are so negatively inclined? I am glad we agreed to ask them all to take part actively in the fantasy trip. Anyway, it must not go wrong. The steps are clear: I hand out the photocopies to the pupils, wait for reactions (What if there aren't any?), guide them over to the fantasy trip, ask them to close their eyes (What if they don't?) and...

When the class is ready (sitting at groups of desks) they are given photocopies of photographs with scenes from beaches, seashores, pictures of seagulls, etc. (The picture in Bach's book *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* may give an idea of what they were like.) Each of these photocopies has one of the following texts:

I am sitting on a rock

The waves are playing with my toes

Time to think

Flying high and fast -

Together

The sun is going down

I can feel the warm sand under my feet

It was a good day

I must take my time

To look

Where I am going

The sky and ocean

Wide...

I am free to go wherever I like

It feels good

To try

What you have never done before

I am strong

I wonder how the kids will react. Will they react at all? Silence. Perhaps there are too many spectators? Am I expecting too much of

this class? I know I have to wait. But so long? .....They seem to be getting involved and interested. They are swapping sheets, they seem to be thinking about the texts. Eva is nodding her head. Peter is about to say something. Thank God.

He is going to break the ice.....

P1: I don't know what we should do with these.

I would have hoped for a better start. But wait--let's see what we can make out of these. I find myself thoughtfully looking at Peter.

T: I see, the pictures and the texts don't tell you anything....

P1: Not that. I mean the pictures...they are nice. They look nice. But I can't see a meaning in the texts.

P2: That's not right. For example the text on this picture says "Flying high and fast--together." That's a good meaning.

T: What do you understand by that?

P2: I think this means...er...when you have a friend when you do something not alone...I mean you work together...you can make it better...

P1: I see what you mean.

P3: The pictures...when I look at them I thinking of the holidays... in Italy last year...of situations on the...what's "Strand" in English? Beach.

P3: Yes. On the beach with my friends....

After a couple of other pupils have verbalized their associations they are all confronted with the idea of making a fantasy trip together. They (as well as the spectators) are asked to close their eyes and to try to find a position in which they feel comfortable.

I switch on the cassette recorder and feel how the tension lets up when the music begins to fill the room. We have chosen an instrumental version of Neil Diamon's music to J.L. Seagull. I regain a certain confidence but my voice is still trembling slightly when I suggest some relaxing exercises. Relaxing myself by looking directly at the children and colleagues in front of me, I begin to feel safer and I notice how I sound soft and calm now.

When you have closed your eyes, just stay in your position and relax... take a deep breath and be conscious of it...let yourself breathe slowly and deeply...notice any part of your body that needs to relax....

For those interested in trying out similar exercises in their classroom it might be helpful to look at what Moskowitz (1978:178) says about them and their introduction. There are also a number of carefully described fantasies which can easily be tried out in classes.[2]

> *Now I begin to conduct the fantasy journey. My voice comes out firmly and calmly. After every sentence I pause, sometimes turning the volume of the music up again, then lowering it while I am speaking so it recedes into the background. (The whole fantasy lasts for about 15 minutes.)*
>
> I want you to imagine that you are at the seashore/Can you hear the water coming in and going out again?/Can you feel the sand?/Look around you. What can you see?/Are there any mountains?/What is the sky like?/Is it cloudy?/Can you feel the sun?/Can you feel the wind on your body now?/Imagine you are slowly flying away with the wind./ What does it feel like?/Are you looking down or up in the sky?/Can you feel the wind?/Now imagine you see the land below you./You are going down a bit. You can see something far away, but you don't know what it is./What is it?/You are going nearer and nearer....
>
> Longer break: music louder
>
> What does it look like?/Is it something you have seen before?/Touch it./What does it feel like?/Is it warm? Is it soft?/What does it mean for you?/What do you feel when you look at it?
>
> Longer break: music louder
>
> Now that you have seen what it is, slowly say goodbye to it. Touch it once more before you slowly move away from it. Go back to the seashore now./Can you feel the sand under your body again?/Take some time until you want to be back with me in class again./Don't hurry./Don't come back before you want to./When you feel ready, open your eyes again....

There are various ways to take advantage of the insights into ourselves that become possible by working with fantasies in foreign-language teaching. We have, for example, created another one ("I'm a kite") which makes it perfectly possible for pupils (even at an early stage in their language learning) to experience the notion of the progressive tense within themselves by being conducted in the fantasy, e.g.: Now you are flying over a big park. The people underneath you are...etc.

In the case at hand there are no specific linguistic aims. What we have in mind is to stimulate the pupils' imagination and to make them share their images and experiences afterwards. Talking about these might have been constructive as

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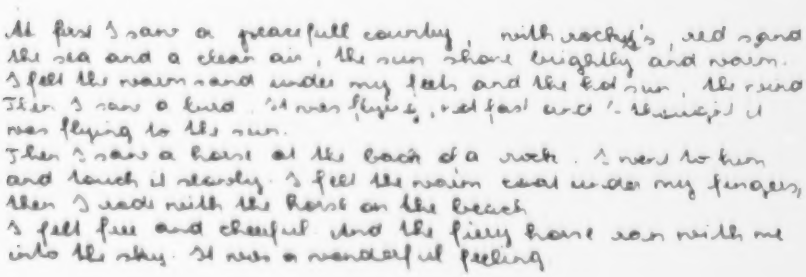
[2]As far as the fantasy trip presented here is concerned, we are grateful to Gerlinde Puchta, who has helped us to make our vague ideas concrete and practicable.

well, but we chose to have them write texts since we were afraid that they would have inhibitions and therefore not be ready to talk about their experiences as freely as usual in this new situation. Their texts show a wide spectrum of different experiences, dreams, hopes, worries and images. Two of them are presented here.



At first I saw a peacefull country, with rocky's, red sand, the sea and a clear air, the sun shone brightly and warm. I felt the warm sand under my feet and the hot sun, the wind Then I saw a bird. It was flying fast and I thought it was flying to the sun.
Then I saw a horse at the back of a rock. I went to him and touch it slowly. I felt the warm coat under my fingers, then I rode with the horse on the beach
I felt free and cheerful and the fiery horse ran with me into the sky. It was a wonderful feeling

I have been on the beach. I felt the sun and the wind. I flew away. I saw a land with war and dead people. I flew over it. Then I saw something hugh. I flew nearer and nearer. It was a big palace made of glas. I touched the glass and I felt that it was cold. Very cold. I looked into the palace and I saw the peace. He was not free, he had to stay in the glass place. He couldn't go out. He was arrested. I would like to help him, but the wind blew me away. I fell asleep. When I woke up I was on the beach and the sun was shining in the my face.

In the followup lesson the texts are discussed in class. The learners seem to be enthusiastic about their own and their classmates' experiences. Undoubtedly, their thoughts show a remarkable dimension of depth, which obviously involves them completely. This is an excerpt from the discussion in class after the above text has been read aloud:

P1: I think the idea in this text is just like mine. You want away...er...want to have peace...away from here.

P2: Yes, but it's different because you write about a ski-jumper and I have seen the war in my fantasy trip.

P1: Yes, but you also go away from this world to another world and you also want to find peace.

T: While you were having the images of war and of the land with the dead...were you afraid?

P: Not, really, perhaps a little, but I flew away.

P3: I like what you write from the glass palace. It's a good picture.

P4: Yes, the glass palace...I think part of this we are ourselves. We don't want the peace to go out...if we would we had to do much more for it.

P5: Yes, I think some people they say they want peace but they don't do it. If you want peace you must do peace.

P6: I meet...I sometimes meet...when I speak to somebody I feel that they are not themselves...that they do not say what they really mean..

THE INNER TEACHER

We hope that the descriptions of the two lessons have given a feeling of what we understand by "inner world" of the teacher. It is primarily the teachers' anxieties that prevent them from letting go in the actual teaching situation and from becoming a facilitator for the pupils' language development instead of acting as a control mechanism. Take the following situation:

> A teacher might react to the utterances "I has give poster" with "I *have* five poster*s*, don't forget it is *I have* and posters must be in the plural." Or he might simply ask: "You have got five posters? Have you also got one with butterflies?"

We could provide lots of pro and con arguments for both reactions. It does, however, rarely depend on rational reasons as to whether a teacher's reaction is one way or the other in the actual situation, but rather on strong unconscious, internal patterns. Stevick (1980:29) quotes Galway's "Inner Game" and suggests that the best learning can take place when the Conscious, Critical

Self and the Performing Self are in agreement with one another. Very often it is this Critical Self that interferes with the possible growth of a process by passing judgment on the teacher's or the pupil's contribution. Such patterns are, of course, sometimes influenced by the way teachers themselves experience language learning. We suggest the concept of an "Inner Teacher" (by it we mean the strict, demanding, intolerant ego that often influences the teacher's reaction). The anxieties caused by the "Inner Teacher" are easily transferred into the learning situation and onto the pupils.

From conversations with teachers we have found that one of the principal anxieties to surface stems from the problem of how to handle errors. "Why can't they discuss the problem lucidly? I think I should interfere and stop this boring gibberish, full of errors. If I allow them to go on making so many mistakes, they will be picked up by others. Wouldn't it be better to correct every mistake immediately? At least it would soothe my conscience."

Brumfit (1980:126) writes that pupils should be given plenty of opportunity to make mistakes. Many teachers, however, are strongly influenced by a rigid negative attitude toward errors. An error is looked upon as something for which there is no place in the classroom, which is to be avoided at all costs since it might spread like a contagious disease. We suspect that the strong feeling aroused by pupils' mistakes are a result of the teachers' own feeling of inadequacy since they suspect that the number of pupils' mistakes has indirect correlation to teaching ability.

The solution we suggest is to get teachers involved in an intensive L2 discussion (in the foreign language) and then interrupt whenever an error occurs. This procedure makes it usually possible for them to identify with the learners' negative feelings when interrupted by the teacher's comment on accuracy.

During a teaching training seminar, teachers talked about their anxieties after an atmosphere of mutual trust had carefully been established. Here are some examples of what they wrote down afterwards:

- It is difficult for me to endure silence. What does the pupils' silence mean? Are they thinking? Have they sunk into apathy? Have I presented something which they don't understand or which they can't manage? Why don't they say so? Are they afraid?

- Why does it take them so long to make a statement, to talk? I know it's important that they should be given the chance to grope for words but sometimes it seems to be more than I can stand. We should have mastered lexxon X long ago and here we are, right in the middle of it. It's like being caught in a swamp.

- When I look at the book and the curriculum I feel this pressure. There are so many things in the books my pupils don't know anything about. How can I make them learn faster and more intensively?

- Are my pupils good enough? I've no idea how good the English of other groups is. Maybe they would be better if I knew more of the language and about how to teach it more effectively.

> • I know I should convey a feeling of security, but how can I do it when I'm in doubt about what I'm doing? I wish to be told how to do everything--in detail. First they sold us the audio-lingual approach, and now we are warned not to do so many pattern drills. What should I think of it all, when even the experts do not seem to know for sure?

We suspect that the contents of these inner monologues are shared by many a teacher, as their reactions in the classroom seem to indicate. Being unable to throw themselves into the situation, to take advantage of the here and now, the pressure felt is often transferred to the pupils.

It is an indisputable fact that most of us go into the lesson with a given set of expectations: If we realize that these expectations might not be fulfilled we begin to look for reasons and excuses, mostly blaming either ourselves or shifting the blame on to the students. This attitude can have fatal results. If the teachers use up all available energy in trying to judge whether the outcome of a specific situation is good enough to withstand the severe evaluation of the eyes (or ears) of the "Inner Teacher," they run great risks: it might become impossible for them to hear what the pupils really say and to react effectively, and they might have problems establishing an atmosphere that allows the pupils to experiment with the new language. Brown says that "... the inhibitations, the defenses, which we place between ourselves and others can prevent us from communicating in a foreign language" (1980:106).

We readily admit that the non-judgmental attitude which we have advocated here may conflict with the task of evaluating the pupils' results. Although we have not found the ultimate solution to this problem, we regard it as helpful to establish an understanding between the teacher and the pupils regulating these problems.

We began by saying that progress demands new materials and a change in teachers' attitudes. It is obvious that it is much easier to produce textbooks, tapes, etc., which meet the requirements of the communicative approach than it is to embark on the task of changing patterns of behavior. There is no short-cut but only the prospect of a long march. Our experience in in-service training shows that supplying information is important, but not enough. The rigidity of the Inner Teacher is not softened by brainwork alone. We do not let go when we know we can but only when we feel it.

It's confidence, not mere knowledge of the possibility, that enables us to let go.

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